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ABSTRACT

Because the many distinct native languages and cultural variations of Native Americans create special educational needs for their children, it is important to encourage the active involvement of Indian parents and tribal leaders in planning and implementing Indian education programs. This report provides specific recommendations and practical approaches made by the Education Commission of the States Task Force on Indian Education to encourage the involvement of the Indian people in the education of their children. The report also provides illustrations of what has been done by Michigan in the area of policy and by California in the area of legislation in their efforts to improve Indian education. Also included is a description of current efforts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, by tribes, by the Coalition of Indian Controlled School Boards, and by the National Indian Education Association. In addition to parental/tribal involvement in education, there is a need for more Indian professionals in the education field and for the development of a curriculum that accurately portrays Indian people, both historically and on a contemporary basis. Federal, state, and tribal governments must work cooperatively to improve the quality of Indian education. (CM)

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THE STATE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

Working Papers
on Meeting the Education Needs
of Cultural Minorities

November 1980

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Preface

At the 1980 annual meeting of the Education Commission of the States, a resolution was adopted directing staff "to evaluate current and possible activities of the Commission concerning the educational needs of cultural minorities, including but not limited to Hispanics, and to report to the steering committee at its fall 1980 meeting."

To some extent, the ability of the staff to evaluate current activites of the Commission was dependent on developing an understanding of what kinds of education needs are of greatest concern to cultural minorities at this time (summer/fall of 1980). That, in turn, led to the need to group cultural minorities into specific categories and to identify the education needs of each group as well as to determine which needs were common to more than one group.

The staff, therefore, commissioned six papers to be written on the education needs of the following groups: (1) Blacks; (2) Mexican Americans; (3) Cubans; (4) Puerto Ricans; (5) Indians and Native Alaskans; and (6) Asians and Pacific Islanders. The papers were written by individuals who are noted authorities and they were reviewed by individuals who also are recognized as experts on minority concerns. Because of the very short period of time between the annual meeting and the fall steering committee meeting, authors and reviewers were not asked to provide exhaustive, documented reports, but to provide their own perspectives and understanding of the current needs that exist.

A complete list of titles, authors and reviewers follows. The papers will be made available by the Commission, as long as limited supplies last, along with

a "summary report" prepared by the staff. The summary report touches briefly on some of the major concerns raised in the papers and concludes with an overview of ECS activities that appear to be most relevant. The report was prepared for the review of Commissioners to facilitate their discussion at the 1980 fall steering committee meeting of possible future directions that ECS might pursue in the years to come.

Working Papers

on the Educational Needs of

Cultural Minorities

1. The Educational Needs of Black Children, by Andrew Billingsly, President, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland.

   Reviewer: Robert B. Hill, Director of Research, National Urban League, Washington, D.C.

2. The State of Indian Education, by Lee Antell, Director, Indian Education Project, Education Commission of the States.

   Reviewer: David L. Beaulieu, Academic Vice President, Sinte Gleska College, Rosebud, South Dakota.

3. Puerto Ricans and the Public Schools: A Critical Commentary, by Tony Baez, Program Coordinator, Midwest National Origin Desegregation Assistance Center, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

   Reviewer: Maria B. Cerda, Member of the Board, the Latino Institute, Chicago, Illinois.

4. A Report on the Cuban Students in the Dade County Public Schools, Miami Florida, by Rosa Guas Inclan, Supervisor of Bilingual Education, Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Florida.

   Reviewer: Gil Cuevas, Program Specialist, Miami Desegregation Assistance Center for National Origin (Bilingual Education), University of Miami, Miami, Florida.

5. A Legacy of Four Cultures: Education and the Mexican Americans, by Vicente Z. Serrano, Director, Interstate Migrant Education Project, Education Commission of the States.

   Reviewer: Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr., ECS Commissioner, Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, Maricopa Community College, Phoenix, Arizona.

6. Asian and Pacific Americans: An Educational Challenge, by Siri Vongthieres, Senior Consultant, Lau Project, Colorado Department of Education, and Lawrence A. Egan, Senior Consultant, Bilingual Education Unit, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, Colorado.

   Reviewer: Masako H. Ledward, ECS Commissioner, Chairperson, Hawaii Education Counsil, Honolulu, Hawaii.

7. Summary Report, staff document prepared for the fall 1980 meeting of the steering committee of the Education Commission of the States.

Executive Summary

Who is responsible for the education of Indian children? Certainly the federal government has a major responsibility as a result of treaty obligations. Tribes themselves, as "dependent nations," surely bear primary responsibility. But states, which have constitutional responsibility for education in our federal system, are also responsible -- particularly since over 90 percent of all Indian students attend public schools.

If shared responsibility is a complicating factor, so too are the unique education needs that Indian children have. More than any other minority group, Native Americans are heterogeneous, speaking as many as 200 distinct native languages with many equally unique cultural variations as well.

Clearly, no single solution would be appropriate for these diverse peoples. It is not possible to devise a set of teaching strategies or curriculum materials that would be responsive to the needs of all Indian children. Thus, the single most promising approach open to educators is to encourage the active involvement of Indian parents and tribal leaders in the planning and implementation of education programs and in the day-to-day education of Indian children.

Antell's paper provides specific recommendations, developed by ECS' national Task Force on Indian Education, designed to encourage the involvement of the Indian people in the education of their children. Specifically designed for state policy makers, these recommendations point to a wide range of practical approaches that might lead to such involvement. The paper also provides some

examples from the states (Michigan and California) of effective approaches for improving Indian education.

The reviewer, Dr. David Beaulieu, has contributed substantially to the introductory section of the paper (in lieu of submitting a separate review). As an active participant in the development of the task force recommendations, Dr. Beaulieu has also contributed to the body of the report. In his own words:

> Since the majority of the report accurately describes the results of the six reports of the Indian Education Project of ECS, I can find little to comment on in this area. Though each of the recommendations is accurately reported, I believe the report should emphasize, as was the style of the Indian Education Project Task Force, the need for cooperative models and rules mutually satisfying and beneficial to the cause of Indian education between the federal government, state government and tribal government. The initial report of the Indian Education Project Task Force, Indian Education: The Involvement of Federal, State and Tribal Governments, has many such statements...

With these additional thoughts, then, the reader is referred directly to the body of Antell's report on the following pages.

Introduction

Unlike other minority populations, American Indian tribes as distinct political legal entities have a unique relationship with the federal government, characterized by treaties as the foundation and basis for federal policies. Originally sovereign, Indian tribes today retain all aspects fo that original sovereignty not formally and expressly ceded. Though one aspect of original sovereignty not ceded is the right to control and provide for the education of a Tribe's children, past policies and practices have not enabled or facilitated, until recently, the exercise of this right.

Many of the over 400 treaties signed between 1778-1871 specifically included provisions for education, thereby obligating the federal government in conjunction with more recent statutes to assume a fiscal responsibility in this area. And while the relationships between the federal government and Indian tribes have been fraught with difficulties, Indian tribes do not want to relinquish their treaty entitlements or the statutory obligations of the federal government, nor in any other way jeopardize their status as "domestic dependent nations," (a term used in Cherokee Nation vs. Georgia, 30 U.S. 1,8 (1831)).

Though certain Indian individuals were eligible, after meeting specific social, educational and economic standards, to apply for U.S. citizenship in the 19th century, all classes of Indians born within the United States were made U.S. citizens under the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Though by definition U.S. citizenship usually confers state citizenship in the state of residence, many states waited to confer state citizenship to Indians living within the jurisdictional limits of tribal government until as late as the

1940's to the mid-1950's.

State citizenship of American Indians, irrespective of reservation residence, raises fundamental questions of educational jurisdiction with respect to: (1) the primary responsibility of the federal government to provide for the education of American Indians; (2) a plenary right of tribal government, as an aspect of their original sovereignty, to control and direct the education of their people within their jurisdictional limits; and (3) a constitutionally based responsibility of state governments to provide for education for the citizens within their borders.

State citizenship did not automatically extend the educational jurisdiction of state government into the jurisdictional limits of tribal government. Such an extension was a negotiated process, enabled by the federal government under certain conditions requiring the concurrence of tribal government or Indian parents for the transfer of a primary federal role in the provision of education to state operated and controlled school systems. This process did not end the federal government's fiscal role in Indian education nor did it cede the tribes' right to determine and control education for its own members.

The contemporary picture in Indian Education significantly involves all three governmental entities, the federal government, tribal government, and state government, in the education of American Indians.

Today, there are 459,196 Indian students. Of these, 413,561 attend public schools, 40,635 attend BIA schools and approximately 5,000 attend private schools including parochial and Indian-controlled contract schools. (Figures are for 1979-80 from the Office of Indian Education and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.)

Meeting the Education Needs of Indian Students

On January 1, 1979, the Indian Education Project at the Education Commission of the States began operation. The project focused on five target states -- Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, and South Dakota -- to determine what changes needed to be made in education practices affecting Indian children in these heavily Indian-populated states. Research prior to the beginning of the project identified: (a) Indian student dropout rates twice as high as the national average; (b) Indian student achievement levels significantly lower than white achievement levels, with the gap increasing throughout the school year; (c) extremely low self-esteem for many individual Indian children; (d) a general sense among educators that Indian children were below average in intelligence, and more so than for any population subgroup; and (e) Indian unemployment rates of 70% on reservations.

The Indian Education Project staff and a national task chaired by Governor Victor Atiyeh of Oregon, faced the challenge of analyzing these serious problems and making recommendations for their resolution. The task force also pursued complex issues that directly centered around the jurisdictional questions of who is responsible for the education of Indian children -- the tribe, the federal government, state government, or all three of these entities, at varying levels of fiscal and program responsibility. On September 30, 1980, when the project's current funding expired, staff and task force members had completed their initial mission.

Accomplishments of the Indian Education Project to Date:

The Indian Education Project of the Education Commission of the States has completed its work. Some of its noteworthy accomplishments include:

(a) Six reports on the state of Indian education -- from a historical perspective to current practices -- have been completed.

The six reports include:

1. Indian Education: The Involvement of Federal, State and Tribal Governments
2. Indian Education: Problems in Need of Resolution
3. Indian Education: Selected Programs and Practices
4. Indian Education: Policy Recommendations
5. Indian Education: An Overview of State Laws and Policies
6. Indian Education: Final Project Report

(b) Initiated and coordinated by project staff, dialogue has occurred between concerned state superintendents, state boards of education, legislators, and Indian people. This interaction has already resulted in the forthcoming adoption of a state department of education policy statement on Indian education in South Dakota. It has also resulted in communication channels being set up in the participating states between educators at the state level, and Indian people and communities at the local level.

(c) Resolutions that support the ECS Indian Education Project in its efforts to improve education for Indian children have resulted from discussions with such organizations as the National Congress of American Indians, the Coalition of Indian Controlled School Boards, the National Advisory Council on Indian Higher Education Consortium, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Association of State Boards of Education.

(d) Stimulated by project activities, important recommendations on the roles and responsibilities of the tribal, state, and federal governments are being defined and discussed by individuals and by state-level policy makers.

(e) Stimulated by project activities, officials from the federal government -- The Office of Indian Education in particular -- have met and articulated their concerns about Indian education programs funded at the federal level.

(f) In five states -- Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, and South Dakota -- project staff have successfully communicated with Indian and non-Indian people to articulate and determine the processes necessary to improve and expand Indian education.

The Indian Education Project at the Education Commission of the States has identified appropriate actions the five target states can take to improve education for Indian children, with direct application of these recommendations suggested for all other states with significant Indian populations. These recommendations follow.

Task Force Recommendations

It is recommended that tribes:

- Develop educational philosophies, codes, and policies on Indian education.
- Develop stronger roles for tribal communities and parents, and exert more influence on public schools within the reservation and/or Indian community.
- Conduct education need assessments and projects to determine future tribal manpower needs.
- Encourage voter registration as a tribal priority which can in turn effect education change.
- Develop the curriculum that tribes want taught in the schools.

- Educate federal, state, and local policy makers on pressing tribal issues.

- Become more actively involved in the state political process, particularly with respect to the state legislature.

It is recommended that state legislatures:

- Insure that schools educating Indian students have adequate financial resources for the basic education program.

- Examine school board election procedures to see why so few Indians serve on school boards.

- Examine barriers to financing public school construction on trust lands.

- Consider state financial support for alternative Indian education programs and tribally controlled community colleges.

- Work with state education agencies to establish regional technical assistance centers for Indian education, within the state, utilizing state funds.

- Insure that gifted and talented Indian children are identified and served.

- Provide state appropriations for bilingual and bicultural programs that Indian children need.

It is recommended that governors:

- Appoint Indians to state boards of education, boards of regents for higher education, and to other education boards.

- Use the prestige of their offices to support legislation and appropriations for Indian education.

- Be reminded that the ECS Indian Education Project Task Force recommendations to state education agencies are ultimately the responsibility of the governors' offices for implementation.

- Be encouraged to hire Indian staff persons.

It is recommended that state board and state education agencies:

- Review and analyze present education policies, laws and other actions that impact upon Indian education; then develop written, formalized Indian education policy statements that are based upon adopted tribal policies and philosophies.

- Place Indian culture courses in the curriculum for all students.
- Examine Indian representation on school boards and how it is affected by membership selection methods.
- Develop and implement administrative rules and standards for the implementation of legislative action on Indian education, in consultation with tribes and Indian parents.
- Hold statewide public hearings on Indian education.
- Recognize and consider the need to establish and maintain a standardized, centralized data base on Indian education.
- Establish regional technical assistance centers within the state for Indian education, with state funds appropriated by the legislature.
- Recognize the negative impact of school consolidation -- rural and urban -- upon Indian students.
- Promote and improve communication channels with tribes and Indian parents.
- Modify tenure laws by lengthening the time required to attain teacher tenure.
- Make concentrated efforts to help school districts with the design, implementation, and coordination of programs that will serve the gifted and talented Indian child.
- Work with school districts to establish bilingual and bicultural education programs for Indian children, funded by state appropriations.
- Insure that handicapped Indian children are identified and served.
- Help local education agencies develop and encourage vocational education programs for both Indian adults and school dropouts.
- Work with local education agencies to monitor LEA affirmative action plans, to insure that "Indian preference" is exercised where significant Indian populations reside.
- Promote Indian-operated alternative schools where appropriate.
- Place Indians in education policy making positions.
- Establish a state-funded Indian education office.

It is recommended that local education agencies:

- Recognize and reflect the unique cultural and academic needs of Indian children, developing specialized programs to meet those needs.
- Promote Indian parents' involvement in the policy making operation of the local school district.
- Promote and foster improved communication with Indian parents and tribes.
- Where appropriate, recommend and encourage the establishment of alternative Indian schools.
- Learn and understand the unique federal-Indian relationship.
- Not only recognize the needs of the Indian community for after-school use of school buildings, but encourage tribal communities to use school facilities.
- Implement affirmative actions that effectively include Indian teacher and school administrator recruitment and that emphasize "Indian hiring preference" where appropriate.
- Require education needs assessments designed in consultation with tribes, when natural resource development results in "boomtown" effects.

It is recommended that colleges and universities:

- Recruit and prepare Indians in all areas of education - especially as classroom teachers, administrators, and counselors.
- Develop and improve teacher training programs that prepare teachers to meet the special and unique education needs of Indian students.
- Accept the existence and legitimacy of tribally controlled community colleges.
- Accept transfer credits from tribally controlled community colleges.
- Expand off-campus degree programs to Indian reservations.
- Promote research on Indian education, principally by Indian researchers.

It is recommended that the federal government:

- Reaffirm its' commitment to Indian education.
- Immediately begin a program to subsidize a long-range effort designed to train American Indian administrators, teachers, and counselors.

- Increase P.L. 815 funds for public high school construction on reservation lands and in areas of high density Indian population.
- Simplify its regulations for Indian Education Act funding.
- Keep "B" students' funding in P.L. 874, "Impact Aid."
- Reimplement the use of public service employment money for public school construction on reservations.
- Reauthorize Title IV, the Indian Education Act of 1972, beyond 1983.
- Create a National Center for Indian Education.
- Assess the capabilities of state education agencies to provide technical and administrative assistance for federal programs in Indian education.
- Modify civil service laws to seek and retain qualified Indian personnel.
- Increase federal scholarship and fellowship money for Indian college students.
- Require that all Indian education programs effectively monitor and enforce affirmative action plans.
- Provide funds to encourage an increase in the number of tribal education facilities constructed on tribal lands.

It is recommended that Indian parents:

- Monitor and participate in all school activities.
- Recognize the importance of supporting, reinforcing and motivating their children to remain in school.
- Assist in establishing quality education standards for their children.

It is recommended that Indian students:

- Accept the responsibility for their own education.

It is recommended that the Education Commission of the States:

- Reaffirm its commitment to improved education opportunities for Indian children.
- Insure that in all its future studies, it includes consideration of the unique needs of Indians, and that it also develops - with appropriate tribal consultation - recommendations to meet those needs.

State Efforts In Indian Education

State efforts to improve Indian education fall into two primary areas. The first area is that of policy on the part of the state board or department of education and the second is that of state legislation. To illustrate these areas one example of each is listed.

MICHIGAN - Policy

On December 19, 1973, the Michigan State Board of Education received and accepted a Position Statement/Paper on Indian Education, as submitted by the Coordinator of Indian Education for the state, and as approved by the State Advisory Council on Indian Education. The report indicated a need for better coordinated federal programs, more involvement of Indian parents and communities in local education decision-making, better clarification by local education boards and school administrators of the unique and dual citizenship of the American Indian people in the state of Michigan, in depth clarification of the roles and responsibilities of local school boards and school administrators in Indian education as well as of conflicting views and activities concerned with Civil rights legislation, Indian-related federal legislation, treaty ties, and obligations that confused local school boards and administration rather than helping them.

Recommendations made and accepted by the Michigan State Board of Education included:

a. It is recommended that the state board of education recognize and encourage school districts to incorporate appropriate American Indian

cultural and heritage studies where Native American youth attend public schools; and to encourage those schools who by choice desire inclusion of Indian studies in their curricula.

b. It is recommended that the state board of education ask that the state legislature require teachers instructing Indian children in public and parochial schools to have a minimum number of credits in Indian education.

c. It is further stated that the state board of education will encourage and support workshops on Indian education for school administrators, teachers, and counselors employed where Indian youth attend, and that it will also encourage institutions to give college credit for those who meet attendance requirements.

d. It is requested, too, by the state board of education that necessary administrative services at the state level will prevail that will adequately incorporate at the state and local levels all phases of Title IV and other programs specifically related to Indian education.

e. It is requested that the state board of education support legislation that eliminates college tuition for Indian youth high school graduates graduating from any of the state's public or parochial schools.

f. It is recommended that the state board of education pursue a policy that affirms the philosophy that any demeaning literature about minority people used in public schools may be construed as deliberate discrimination against them.

g. It is requested that the state board of education encourage affirmative action policies at the state and local level that will benefit Indian teachers and school administrators.

h. It is recommended that eligible local education agencies be encouraged to apply for federal entitlements in Indian education.

i. It is recommended that the Council on Postsecondary Education pursue a study of the development and integration of college courses that will emphasize Indian studies and that will be geared to tribal and Indian community needs.

j. It is requested that the state board of education encourage the state superintendent to publish a brochure that will aid local education agencies with the creation of an accurate Indian enrollment count.

CALIFORNIA - Legislation

SENATE BILL, introduced by Senator Moscone, No. 2264, April 25, 1974..... Expresses legislative intent regarding education of Indian children and establishment of 10 California Indian education centers; provides that centers

shall be designed to perform certain specified functions; provides that state board of education, upon advice and recommendations of the superintendent of public instruction, shall adopt guidelines for the selection and administration of the centers; provides specific procedure for establishing such a center; requires the department of education to annually evaluate the centers and report its findings to the legislature. Appropriates $1,600,000 according to a specified schedule for 1974-75 and 1975-76 fiscal years. To take effect immediately, urgency statute. Vote: 2/3. Appropriation: Yes. Fiscal Committee: Yes. State mandated local programs; No.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 2 (commending with Section 526) is added to Chapter 4.5 of Division 2 of the Education Code, to read:

526. The Legislature hereby finds and declares that Indian children have not succeeded well in California public schools as evidenced by low academic achievement at all grade levels, high dropout rates and only the few students continuing their education beyond high school.

It is the intent and purpose of the Legislature to strengthen the instructional program within the public schools by establishing 10 California Indian education centers.

527. The California Indian education centers established pursuant to this article shall serve as educational resource centers in Indian communities to the Indian students, parents, and the public schools. The centers shall be designed to:

(a) Improve the academic achievement of Indian students with particular emphasis on reading and mathematics.

(b) Improve the self-concept of Indian students and adults.

(c) Increase the employment of Indian adults.

(d) Serve as a center for related community activities.

(e) Provide tutorial assistance to students in reading and mathematics.

(f) Provide individual and group counseling to students and adults related to personal adjustment academic progress, and vocational planning.

(g) Provide coordinated programs with the public schools.

(h) Provide a neutral location for parent-teacher conferences.

(i) Provide a focus for summer recreational sports and academic experience.

(j) Provide adult classes and activities.

(k) Provide college-related training programs for prospective Indian teachers.

(l) Provide libraries and other related educational material.

528. The state board of education, upon the advice and recommendations of the superintendent of public instruction, shall adopt guidelines for the selection and administration of the California Indian Education centers.

529. Application for the establishment of a California Indian education center may be made to the state board of education by any tribal group or incorporated Indian association, either separately or jointly, upon forms provided by the department of education. The state board of education shall select up to 10 applicants for such centers.

530. The department of education shall annually evaluate the California Indian education centers and report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature prior to February 1st of each year.

SEC. 2. There is hereby appropriated from the general fund the sum of one million six hundred thousand ($1,600,000) to the department of education for the California Indian education centers established pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 526) of Chapter 4.5 of Division 2 of the Education Code, to be apportioned according to the following schedule:

(a) For the 1974-75 fiscal year . . . . . $400,000; (b) For the 1975-76 fiscal year $1,200,000

Funds appropriated but not expended shall be carried over to the next fiscal year. The sum appropriated shall be reduced by any amounts made available by the federal government for the purposes of this act. Not more than seventy-five thousand dollars ($75,000) may be used by the department of education for the administration of the California Indian education centers.

SEC 3. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting such necessity are:

In order to permit the establishment and operation of California Indian education centers in the 1974-75 school year, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.

Other Current Efforts

The shameful condition of Indian schooling was called to national attention in 1969 by the work of a Senate Sub-Committee investigating the education problems of American Indians. The report, Indian Education: A National Tragedy -- A National Challenge (Senate Report No. 91-501) began with the acknowledgement

that federal Indian policy had been one of forced assimilation, divesting the Indian of land, resources and identity. Furthermore, the school had been a primary tool utilized to separate the Indian child from his or her home, family and culture. Low levels of educational achievement, alarmingly high dropout and absenteeism rates, poor self-image and the scarcity of Indian professionals were among the indicators cited in need of rectification.

To overcome such problems, a number of entities today have been working in a variety of ways to seek solutions. Some examples of these efforts are as follows.

United States Department of Education/Office of Indian Education

This office was created by the Indian Education Act of 1972, and its programs are the most visible effort in Indian education today. Part A of the Act provides entitlement funds to approximately 1,100 public school districts to meet the special educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian students. Part A also provides funds for schools that are not local educational agencies. Part B of the Act provides for a wide range of programs primarily to tribes and Indian organizations. Programs range from research, to tutorial, to teacher and administrator training. Part C of the Act provides for adult education. Fellowships for college students are also a part of the act.

Bureau of Indian Affairs/Indian Education Division

The education division operates approximately 250 schools for Indian students, enrolling 40,635 students. The Bureau also administers the Johnson O'Malley program which provides funds for special needs programs for Indian students in public schools. The Bureau also operates a scholarship program

for Indian college students. The Indian Community College Act, PL 95-471 is also administered by the Bureau.

Indian Tribes

Tribes today are creating their own departments of education. They then instruct each department to develop a tribal educational philosophy, and tribal codes and policies for education. These codes reflect the education needs of Indian students as viewed by the tribe and not necessarily as viewed by local boards of education.

The Coalition of Indian Controlled School Boards

The Coalition, located in Denver, is an advocate for the control by Indian parents of schools serving large numbers of Indian children -- both public and private. The Coalition is very active in numerous states with significant Indian populations.

The National Indian Education Association

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) convened a meeting, "Indian Education: The State of the Art," in Denver, Colorado in August of 1979. The meeting resulted in the following priority goal statements to be sought by the organization.

Priority Goal I
(Educational/Curtural)

To improve the quality of education to American Indian children and adults.

Priority Goal II
(Administrative/Management)

To establish and support an inter-organizational alliance for the development, coordination and increased communication of educational issues, research and

development, government and legislation, information dissemination and diffusion, and inter-organizational news and events.

Priority Goal III
(Political/Legislative)

To promote, coordinate and support the development of a compact and readily available educational package to effectively distribute to and inform the states of the special status, legal rights, and sovereignty of the Indian tribes and reservations in these United States.

Priority Goal IV
(Research & Development/Evaluation/Dissemination)

To foster the realization that American Indian educators, themselves, need the opportunities to meaningfully apply educational research techniques in respective tribal/educational settings involving American Indian children. Based on basic and applied research findings, development needs can be identified and implemented in the fields of curriculum development, teacher-administrator training/awareness materials, processes for parental participation in formal/non-formal educational settings, and applied evaluation techniques. Dissemination and diffusion of these and other applicable educational research and development methods and materials are absolutely implicit in the development and implementation of this and the previous three priority goals.

Indian Education: What Remains to be Done

While there are many areas of Indian education that need attention, only three will be focused on here as primary needs.

1. Indian tribal/parental involvement in education decision making affecting Indian children.

2. The scarcity of Indian professionals as teachers, administrators and counselors.

3. The development of curriculum, for all children, which accurately portrays Indian people, both historically and in a contemporary fashion.

Summary

Indian education has long been in need of reform. Over the years, the federal, state, and tribal governments have sought improvement but have experienced limited success. In future efforts, organizations such as the Education

Commission of the States will need to view the education of this population as a priority and devote more time and attention to it. Existing governmental entities must continue to work cooperatively together towards mutually acceptable educational solutions.